

COUNTY COUNCIL  
FOR MONTGOMERY COUNTY, MARYLAND

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By: Transportation and Environment Committee at the  
request of the County Executive

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Subject: County Environmental Policy

Background and Purpose

1. The County Council and the County Executive determined that individual County Government agencies and departments operate under a variety of policies, procedures, mandates, visions, and mission statements, but no overarching County environmental policy exists under which environmental initiatives are planned, implemented, and evaluated.
2. The County wishes to be recognized as a leader in the area of environmental policy by other public and private organizations that operate both in the County and in the region. Adoption of a comprehensive environmental policy will better position the County to lead by example.
3. The County desires to increase the awareness of all county agencies, departments, and employees that their actions have environmental consequences and that we all have a responsibility to promote public health, environmental resource management, and environmental protection.
4. In April 2000 the County Department of Environmental Protection developed the Montgomery County Environmental Assessment 2000, an assessment of countywide baseline conditions and indicators to evaluate the quality of environmental resource conditions. The baseline conditions and indicators were evaluated for air quality, energy consumption, hazardous materials, noise, biodiversity, stream and groundwater quality, water supply, stormwater and watershed management, forest conservation, recycling and transportation. These assessments identified the status and trends in protecting the public health and the environment for these indicators of the quality of life in the County. This document provides the type of indicators and trend analyses that are useful in directing resources in the County for measurable and effective environmental improvements.
5. A County environmental policy will provide a framework to County departments and agencies to identify resource needs to accomplish environmental objectives and goals. An environmental policy will also assist elected officials in directing resources to promote sound environmental practices.

6. Public outreach, comment, and input are critical components of successful initiatives and must be specifically incorporated into the environmental policy framework.
7. The Department of Environmental Protection has successfully piloted a program that coordinated the development of Environmental Management Systems (EMS) in several executive branch departments. Participating departments reviewed their operating practices and procedures to identify opportunities for greater environmental compatibility. This program required environmental awareness education for both management and staff before each department developed its own list of improved practices that allowed it to conduct its work with greater environmental sensitivity.

### Action

The County Council for Montgomery County, Maryland, approves the following resolution:

#### **1. Establishment of the Environmental Policy Implementation Task Force**

An Environmental Policy Implementation Task Force (EPITF) is hereby established to promote communication and coordination of County agencies and departments in the development of internal environmental actions that achieve the goals of the county's Environmental Policy.

The Task Force has the following duties and responsibilities:

- a. Develop an Environmental Issues and Actions Report.
- b. Develop environmental reporting standards that can be used to collect the costs of all environmental actions and related activities of all departments and agencies into standard classifications.
- c. Review budget initiatives proposed by departments and agencies that would have a significant environmental impact, and forward recommendations to the Council as appropriate.
- d. Seek public input on environmental issues and work with member agencies to ensure that information on environmental issues is effectively disseminated to the public.
- e. Consider amendments to the County Code that would make the Task Force a permanent interagency committee, and forward any recommendations to the Council within 6 months after this resolution is adopted.

The Task Force must be composed of a senior manager that the Council invites each of the following to designate:

- i. The Chief Administrative Officer
- ii. Montgomery County Public Schools
- iii. Montgomery College
- iv. County Planning Board
- v. Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission
- vi. Staff Director of the County Council, who serves as an ex officio, non-voting member

The chair of the Task Force must be the member designated by the Chief Administrative Officer. The chair is responsible for the normal duties of a committee chair, including calling meetings, appointing chairs of subcommittees, and other duties as appropriate. The Task Force must meet at least quarterly to promote the goals of this Environmental Policy.

The Task Force may create one or more subcommittees composed of senior level staff members.

The Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) must provide the staff support required by the Task Force and any subcommittees to coordinate meetings, provide support functions, provide technical and policy guidance, and related duties as needed for the Committee and subcommittees to effectively perform their responsibilities as assigned. The Task Force must advise the DEP Director of the level support it requires.

## **2. Environmental Issues and Actions Report**

The Environmental Policy Implementation Task Force, with staff support from DEP, must prepare an Environmental Issues and Actions Report for the County on the following schedule:

- Issue a draft report within 90 after this resolution is adopted.
- Hold a public forum within 30 days after the draft report is released.
- Issue a final report to the County Council no later than 30 days after the public forum.

This report must identify priority environmental issues in the County and recommend potential best practices that can be taken to improve environmental quality within governmental agency practices. The environmental issues addressed in this report must include, but need not be limited to, the issues outlined in DEP's *Environmental Assessment 2000*.

The Council may review and adopt this report as a reference document for the development of Environmental Action Plans by agencies and departments.

## **3. Environmental Action Plans**

Each County agency and department is requested to develop an Environmental Action Plan (EAP) addressing selected environmental issues identified in the Environmental Issues and Actions Report. Each agency and department must identify the environmental issues that it wishes to address and propose appropriate environmental actions it would implement to address these issues.

The Task Force must compile agency Environmental Action Plans and report this information to the Council within one year after this resolution is adopted.

#### **4. Environmental Management Systems**

The Council encourages the use of the principles contained in the Environmental Management Systems (EMS) (International Organization for Standardization 14001) or a similar approach in the development of each agency and departmental Environmental Action Plan. The Task Force must encourage cooperative training efforts between the agencies and recommend actions to minimize costs and maximize coordination of training needs. The Department of Environmental Protection staff should function as a resource on environmental compliance issues.

#### **5. Environmental Awards Program**

The Task Force, in coordination with the County Executive, must design an environmental awards program as a component of *Montgomery's Best* award program. This environmental awards program should recognize environmental leadership in promoting and implementing the objectives of the Environmental Policy. Agencies are encouraged to develop similar awards programs.

#### **6. Review of Environmental Policy**

This policy should be reviewed in the fifth year after adoption. A Councilmember may propose amendments at any time.

#### **7. Agency Governance**

Various County agencies have distinct governance processes. This Environmental Policy is intended to be managed through these existing processes. For the Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission, coordination with Prince George's County on certain issues may be required.

This is a correct copy of Council action.

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Mary Edgar, CMC  
Clerk of the Council